

Lesson Plan: Cast Your Vote-1812!

Topic:

Causes of the War of 1812

Historic Question:

Based on the arguments provided in the simulation, should America declare war on Great Britain in the summer of 1812?

Overview:

This lesson plan examines the arguments for and against declaring war on Great Britain in the summer of 1812. Using an online simulation/game, students will examine numerous reasons from across the country to identify the reasons given to declare and not declare war on Britain. Students assess the various reasons in order to cast their vote if the United States Congress should declare war. After completing the simulations, the students will complete a written response regarding whether or not they agree or disagree with the decision to go to war with Britain.

Objectives:

- **Students will identify the arguments for and against the declaration of war against Great Britain.**
- **Students will be able to assess the reasons for America's declaration of war.**
- **Students will be able to compare the outcome with their own opinion.**

Procedure:

1. Display the following terms: Protect Your Rights, Defend Your Honor, and Make Money. Ask: "What is most important to you?"
"Are any of these terms worth fighting for? If so, which?"

TIME REQUIRED

90 Minutes

GRADE RANGE

Grades 4-6

STANDARD

National Social Studies
Standard – U.S. History
12.4 Expansion and Reform
(1801-1861)

Understands United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans

AUTHOR

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MATERIALS USED

Computers
(30 Minutes of Use)
Headphones
Resource Sheet:
Should the U.S. Declare War on the British?
Video Clips

Procedure: (continued)

- 2.** Explain that today the class will determine if America should declare war on Britain in 1812. The class will identify the reasons proposed by different people to determine if a war against Britain was necessary. On the interactive website, President Madison will invite the students to investigate the reasons to and not to declare war.
- 3.** Listen to each of the video clips by Henry Clay, Margaret Elliot, Francis Scott Key, Josette Douglas, George Roberts, John Bradford, John Randolph, and James Madison. Identify if each clip agrees or disagrees with the declaration of war by circling the arguments stated by each person in their video clip and completing Resource Sheet: "Should the U.S. Declare War on Great Britain?" In order to move to the next video clip students will select an "X" if the individual is against the war and "O" if the individual supports the war on the simulation.
- 4.** At the end of the simulation/game, President Madison will invite the students to vote. Their votes will be recorded and students will be able to compare their response to how other students voted around the country.
- 5.** After completing the interactive, move into small groups. Construct a list of the top three reasons to go to war against Britain and the top three reasons to avoid going to war against Britain.
- 6.** As a class, ask:
 - *Why did some Americans want to declare war? Are these reasons similar to the what Americans value today: Protecting Our Rights, Defending Our Honor, and Making Money*
 - *Why did some Americans want to avoid war? Are these reasons similar to the what Americans value today: Protecting Our Rights, Defending Our Honor, and Making Money*
 - *What plays a greater role in the division between anti-war and pro-war supporters?*
- 7.** Assign one side of the classroom as "pro-war" and another side as "anti-war". Ask the students to assess all of the evidence and answer: Do you think America should declare war on Britain? Based on the answer to the question, the students will move to either side of the classroom. Moderate a debate allowing students to argue their point of view and rationale.

Assessment:

Display the following: "The United States Congress approved the declaration of war by 62% and the United States Senate approved the declaration of war by 59%".

Ask: Do you agree with America's decision in 1812? In the answer the students will journal about:

- *Why they agree with the decision? Why they disagree with the decision?*
- *What evidence persuaded you the most?*

Students will construct a written response in 3-4 sentences. The written response will reference specific information and examples from the video clips and class discussion. The written response will require the students to compare their response with the actual outcome.

Resource Sheet:

Should the U.S. Declare War on Great Britain?

Directions:

Complete the handout while watching the video clips. For each one:

1. Identify if it is pro-war or anti-war by circling the author's comments.
2. Based on the author's argument, check if the author is for or against the war.

Francis Scott Key Maryland Lawyer

☐ Pro-War Arguments:

- Attacking American Ships
- Capturing American Sailors
- Free Trade •National Pride
- Protect Our Borders
- Expand Our Borders Westward

☐ Anti-War Arguments:

- It Will Hurt Our Economy
- Our Military is Not Prepared
- The British Are Our Allies
- Our Navy is Too Small to Fight

Josette Dugas New Orleans Resident

☐ Pro-War Arguments:

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George Roberts U.S. Navy Sailor

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Margaret Elliot Frontier Resident

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Your Vote

Pro-War

or

Anti-War

Pres. James Madison U.S. President

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Henry Clay Kentucky Congressman

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John Bradford Boston Shipping Merchant

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John Randolph Virginia Senator

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